

Attorneys for Rewald face contempt charges

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Honolulu, Hawaii — Federal Judge Harold Fong on Thursday ordered two of Ronald Rewald's attorneys to explain why they should not be held in contempt for allegedly engaging in unethical conduct during Rewald's fraud trial.

Federal Public Defender Michael Levine, in reaction to Fong's order, asked that the entire three-man defense team be relieved from the case.

He charged that the defense was "under siege" by both the court and prosecutors.

"We cannot do for Mr. Rewald what needs to be done in this case," Levine said.

Fong denied the request, saying that Rewald was getting the best defense possible considering the security restrictions and the fact that his attorneys are provided by the government.

The contempt order stems from an incident Wednesday in which Levine and his assistant, Brian Tamanaha, obtained an example of a CIA agent's handwriting.

The events were triggered by the cross-examination of John Mason, a career CIA officer who now works on contract with the agency. Mason testified that he met Rewald in Los Angeles in 1979 to set up a CIA cover for another agent.

Rewald told his attorneys that the man on the stand was not the same man he had met in Los Angeles.

Earlier in the day, Fong had denied

Levine's request that Mason be forced to provide a signature to prove that he is who he claims to be.

Upon leaving court Wednesday, Mason was approached by Levine's investigator and served with a subpoena to testify as a defense witness. Mason was told to sign the subpoena to verify that he had been served.

The US Marshal's service said recipients of subpoenas are not asked to sign them.

Levine said he did not think Fong's order precluded him from trying to get Mason's signature.

Fong said a protective order had been issued in the case to protect the lives of agents and that the release of a signature could compromise security.

Fong told Levine and Tamanaha to file papers 21 days after a verdict is returned explaining why they should not be held in contempt.

Tamanaha further attracted the judge's ire by allegedly misrepresenting bankruptcy figures during the questioning of Jack Kindschi, a native of Platteville, Wis., and former head of the CIA office in Honolulu.

Kindschi, who now lives in Madison, claims he and his mother are owed more than \$200,000 they lost when Rewald's company collapsed in 1983. Tamanaha said he had been told by bankruptcy officials that Kindschi was owed only \$10,000 and that Hazel Kindschi actually owes the bankrupt estate money.

Prosecutors argued that that was a misrepresentation designed to impeach Kindschi's credibility.